From:	Faye DesPres
To:	Siddiqui, Sumbul
Subject:	Call for Transparency and an end to the Demonization of Israel
Date:	Friday, April 20, 2018 7:12:55 PM

Dear City Council Member E. Denise Simmons,

As a resident of Cambridge, I am writing to you about an issue that is very important to me. As the daughter of a Holocaust survivor and someone who has lived in Israel and who has many relatives there, I respectfully oppose the lack of transparency and unfair singling out of Israel in the City Council Vote that was set to take place on April 23 and has now thankfully postponed.

My Israeli cousin participated as a counselor in the Seeds of Peace camp in Vermont that brings together Palestinian and Israeli youth in an attempt to build bridges. She shared a room during her tenure there with a young woman from Gaza. She and many like-minded Israelis who wish for peace are just as harmed by boycotts as those with hard-line views. Should every company in the United States be boycotted by other nations because of who our current president is and because of our current administration's policies? Many Americans dislike what is happening on a national level, just as many Israelis disagree with certain aspects of their current government's policies. At the same time, Israelis have ALL grown up with the constant threat of war and constant threats of destruction from their neighbors on all sides. It is difficult to make peace with neighbors and populations who have sworn to see your destruction. Yet the efforts have gone on for decades.

This is not a simple problem and there are no easy solutions - especially when the Palestinians vote terrorist organizations into power. Palestinian citizens deserve a good life, but so do Israelis. Every time Israel has tried to ease restrictions, terror attacks have occurred. We cannot imagine, sitting in our homes in Cambridge, what it is to live that way. We should therefore not judge another country based on only one side of the story.

Where are the resolution to boycott Syria, where the government has dropped chemical weapons on its own people? Where are the resolutions against other countries with proven human rights abuses despite not being under the constant threat that Israel is under?

This resolution would have implications beyond Hewlett-Packard and, if adopted, would tarnish the reputation of Cambridge. I know I would be less likely to want to remain here.

The Cambridge City Council should not abdicate its responsibilities to an interest group whose purpose is to demonize Israel. Any resolution of this kind deserves a full and fair public hearing, including inviting experts and interested parties on both sides to weigh in openly before action is taken.

Singling out Israel and HP, amongst all the nations, companies and conflicts in the world, and holding them to a unique ethical standard raises troubling issues about the Cambridge City Council. Thousands of American companies are working overseas and engaged in transactions that can be tied to questionable human rights practices; including numerous companies with Cambridge contacts.

In this instance, the Council is overlooking scores of other situations and electing to support

dubious and largely unexamined claims against Israel made by an outside organization. If the Cambridge City Council elected to adopt a foreign policy that it applied without prejudice to nations and companies around the world, the issue of an ethical double standard would not be raised.

The BDS movement is detrimental to achieving peace. The establishment of a Palestinian state is a goal we share but will not be realized by extreme and deceptive claims that belie the hard reality on the ground. There are many people of goodwill, who are working to bridge the divide between Israelis and Palestinians. Boycotts, like the one under consideration, undermine these peacemakers, fuel polarization, and strengthen the hands of those who reject co-existence.

Regards,
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